

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By *Mme Anastasia Suvorina*
(the Bernhardt of Russia)

Three charming young Russian dancers who escaped from the Cheka's clutches



Drawn especially for this page by
Mr. Edmund Frederick

"Often, at the restaurants or cabarets, she would dance forward, rose in mouth, then stop and smile at some one. That smile was a death warrant! Its recipient knew that in twenty-four hours he would be dead! He would see the servants of the executioners, who followed her always, coming forward to take him."

Petogorsk, and his sweetheart, the beautiful and artistic Genia Ge. In reading what follows do not forget that Cheka was accuser, witness, judge and executioner in one. It held no trials, following the explicit instructions of Derujensky which I have quoted, and there was no appeal from its decisions.

Angievsky had been a common soldier. He was about twenty-four years old. On the nights of October 18 and 19, 1918, after his accession to authority, he slew with his own hands 155 men hostages. Most of them were former generals and high officers, who were then in the Caucasus recovering from wounds received in the great war.

With them were a number of students of different schools, former clerks, a few landlords. On these two nights, by the light of torches and bonfires, the men of Angievsky dragged these victims to the block, upon which they forced their heads. Angievsky cut off the heads with an ax.

The crowd went blood mad. They sang lewd songs, screamed, laughed and insulted the condemned. At the dawn of the second night there was brought from the cellars an old, tall, gray-haired general. He wore a French uniform and gold-rimmed glasses. He knelt before the block and placed his gray head on it.

"Hey, Russky! Hold up your head! Take off your glasses!" shouted the crowd.

For this was Russky, two years before one of the great heroes of the Russian people and one of the greatest of generals. A moment later his head was lifted and hurled down to the rabble.

Genia Ge, the fit mate of this ravening beast Angievsky, was extremely beautiful, talented and highly educated. She was the wife of Alexander Ge, the Anarchist, and was herself Anarchiste. She was a wonderful singer, a splendid pianist, an able painter. Versatile, she wrote for her husband the articles that made him famous in Russia and practically dictated his speeches.

She fell in love with Angievsky and left her husband for him. As his sweetheart the lives of thousands of men and women in the Caucasus were in her hands. She surrounded herself with the most gifted and aristocratic and in-

Hon. John Collier's painting, "A Glass of Wine with Caesar Borgia"—one of history's famous tragedies that has been outdone by many of the Cheka's deeds



tellectual of people. There was none who was not eager to be admitted to her house. And why? Since permission to sing in her presence was regarded as a life guaranty. Permission to paint her or acceptance of a work of art was an insurance policy against assassination.

The lives of all were in her hands. And all knew it. A word to her lover, and then torture and death.

I saw her once. She wore pink and black pearls around her lovely white neck. Ordinary pearls and other gems she despised. Happy was the man who could bring her a rare pink or black one! He was safe. But there was a menace in her great black eyes always; even when she laughed and flirted or played and sang; even when she condescended to make a "tour de valse" with some transported mortal.

Often, at the restaurants or cabarets, she would dance forward, rose in mouth, then stop and smile at some one. That smile was a death warrant! Its recipient knew that in twenty-four hours he would be dead! He would see the servants of the executioners, who followed her always, coming forward to take him.

She was capricious, too. One incautious word and the speaker would be

taken from the gayety and mirth of her home to the headquarters of the Cheka, which were in a cabaret only a few steps from Genia's small but luxurious palace. These walls of the Cheka's lair were painted with merry scenes from the life of "Columbine." But they were spattered with the blood of its victims.

It was into this room that they were brought up from the cellars of the cabaret, tortured and slain.

Sometimes her lover, Angievsky, would appear at the door of her salon, make her a sign and the two would disappear together. When she would return, perhaps half an hour later, invariably her eyes would hold a weird, cruel light—like a leopard's, I thought; her face was pale and a smile that had in it nothing human curved her full lips. Always her guests knew where she had been—witnessing the torment or execution of some unhappy victim of the Cheka, which Angievsky had thought she would enjoy, or that he would enjoy better with her beside him.

Once she asked her lover to let her kill one of his prisoners with her own hands. She did this so gracefully that Angievsky was enthusiastic. His men

"It is like wonderful music," she explained.

So sure was she of her charms that when Denikine's army entered the Caucasus she did not flee, nor would she allow Angievsky to run away. When Petogorsk was captured the chief of the Cheka was found in a cabaret. He had disguised himself with blue spectacles and a long, false beard, slipping, betrayed him.

Given a short trial, Angievsky went mad with terror of that death which he had handed out to so many so cruelly. They hanged him while he was unconscious from fear.

The news of his death was brought to Genia. She ran out of her little palace without shoes, half dressed and with only a shawl over her head. A day later she was found hiding in a small summer house. When, the next day, she was brought before the regiment and a Cossack advanced upon her with a noosed rope, she fought him like a wildcat, offering herself and all she possessed for life. It took three Cossacks to hold her while the rope was put about her neck.

Still fighting, she was executed.

Both Angievsky and Genia Ge, especially the latter, were thought very highly of Derujensky.

His favorite and first disciple is, or was, Blumkin, who murdered Mirbach. Often his chief observed that Blumkin had that "heart of crystal" that he so much desired. Blumkin while applying torture to his victim feels all his or her suffering and suffers himself acutely with each pang he inflicts. Often he has stopped in the midst of some agony to stanch his tears! Or to be himself revived with stimulants! Yet no one could conceive more exquisite tortments than he.

Frequently he has been relieved from his duties, or pleasures, for weeks at a time. Worn out by them!

In this he has the sanction of his master, who has written in his orders: "An executioner must take a vacation often. For if he becomes callous or a machine he is of no more use to us. He should keep himself fresh for his work."

Of other shining lights of the Cheka I shall refer to but two more. One was the notorious Gaenko, chief of the Cheka of Harkov. This man killed each day from ten to fifteen persons with his own hands. It was ordinarily done before dinner. He called it his "before dinner hunt." His victims were not tied, but were left at liberty in the yard, which, however, was closed. Gaenko asserted that it was "good for his eyes" to exercise them in his shooting at the running or hiding people.

His thirteen-year-old son was always present at the murders and was allowed to kill from three to five at each time. Only when he had been "bad" and was to be "punished" did his father deprive this sweet child of his sport.

The other was Ashinine, a former psalmist in a small provincial church, who became chief of Cheka in Stavropole. Between his murders he used to smoke, take tea and joke with the condemned. He did not like to kill his victims at once, saying that "everybody was doing that." His method was to lay them down upon the floor, face down, and cut off their heads. He inflicted other tortments impossible to describe.

Such was the head of the Cheka and some of his most beloved aids. If it is true that this wicked, worse than Satanic organization has been shorn of its power, then Russia is indeed delivered of one of its most dreadful curses.

I wonder if that "Not yet" of Derujensky's reply to Trotsky is at the bottom of it—if it is indeed no more?

Frankenstein was forced to destroy the monster he had created. Perhaps the monster Trotsky and Lenin created out of the wreck of the hated Ochrana was becoming too much for them.

(To Be Continued Next Sunday)